

# Show A Little Respect

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Summary: Hookfang tells his story. 3 short chapters.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*Show a Little Respect\*\* Chapter 1**

I was the ruler of the skies. The Vikings feared me, and called me names that showed their fear. I went where I pleased, I did what I pleased, I took what I pleased, and I burned whatever did not please me. That was a lot, sometimes.

Then came that night when they threw the net over my head, and tied up my wings with weighted ropes, and drove me into a tiny cell and shut the door behind me. And they left me there.

From time to time, I heard them let other dragons out of their cells. I heard sounds of fighting. Why did they not let me out? If they wanted to fight, I would give them a fight! If they did not want to fight me, then why did they keep me caged? This tiny space was meant for a much smaller dragon. Could I remember what the sun and the moon looked like? Sometimes I would spend days thinking nothing but "Let me out let me out let me out let me OUT!"

At last, one day, they let me out.

I heard the noises of many Vikings from all around me. I heard the creak of the door. I prepared my fires. I leaned against the door, so when it was free, it flew open and I burst out, setting myself afire at the same time. Why does such a natural thing frighten them so much? But I heard sounds of fear from all around me. Good. I ran halfway around the ring that imprisoned me, looking for some way out. When I found none, I shot a blast of fire at the nearest Vikings. They scattered like frightened sheep. I climbed onto the ceiling, looking for some other way out. Then I saw him.

He was a tiny Viking, the only one in the ring. He stood there, with



a helmet and shield that were too big for him, and a knife that was far too small for me. Was this who I was supposed to fight? It seemed like an insult! There had to be a trick. I dropped to the ground and faced this little Viking, alert for any surprises.

He stared into my eyes, and I saw no fear. No Viking had ever looked at me without fear before. I stepped toward him warily; he gave ground. Suddenly, he reached out and dropped his weapons. More trickery? I heard no one sneaking up on me from behind. Now the small one's hands were outstretched toward my nose.

Never, in all my many days, had I seen such a thing. One quick bite, and his hand would be gone. This was no attack posture! Was he trying to communicate something? He made some human sounds, something like "issokay, issokay." His voice was not threatening at all. Either this little Viking meant me no harm, which was unimaginable, or this was a very elaborate trick.

If he really meant me no harm, then why did he wear the horned helmet of the dragon killer? I glared at it. To my amazement, he reached up, removed the helmet, and threw it aside. Now he had no offense and no defense. Was it possible that he was peaceful? I heard sounds from the humans that surrounded us; I looked around quickly. I did not dare lower my guard. Not yet.

I looked back at the little one. Again, he had reached for my nose. The gesture was unfamiliar, non-threatening, and oddly relaxing. A nearby Viking said something; the little one answered in a commanding tone, then reverted to his softer voice. I was willing to trust this little Viking. He was certainly different from all the rest. He was not attacking, yet he had no fear. He had something in between. Respect. It is something dragons receive from each other, but never before from a Viking.

Then I heard the crash of metal on metal behind me. A trick! I was right after all! The deceiving little Viking would be the first to go. One quick bite... but he darted away. Very well, the fire. He dodged that, too. He was elusive, this non-violent Viking. I would have to chase him. But the ring that imprisoned me also imprisoned him.

I made repeated attacks, and always I just missed. My long imprisonment had eroded my skills. From nowhere, a hard blow to my head knocked me down. Another small Viking had thrown a weapon at me! So she wanted to be my target? Killing two would be twice as satisfying as one.

The second one dashed for a doorway, followed by the first. No! One of you is not getting away today. A shot of fire at the doorway, and the first one retreated back into the ring. Perfect! I pounced and imprisoned him in my claws.

So, little Viking, you willingly made yourself bait for their trap? Do you know what happens to the bait in a trap? I have waited a long time for this moment. I will enjoy this. You, on the other hand, will â€

Without warning, something powerful lands on my back, claws digging at me painfully. I have to release my prisoner; I need all my limbs to fight. I roll away, but whatever it is, it stays on my back. I



break away, biting furiously at it. It fights me off, kicks, and I fly halfway across the ring.

The night dragon! How did he get here? "I have no quarrel with you!" I roar at him. "Just give me the little one!" In a day full of surprises, the dark one gives me the greatest surprise of all – he places himself between me and my prey, and defends the little Viking! Twice I try to get around him, and twice he moves to block me. My own kind have turned against me! "Traitor!" I roar. "He is mine!" the dark one snarls back. I cannot fight the night dragon on a good day, and I am still weak from captivity, and my head rings from the hammer blow the other small Viking gave me. If the dark one wants the little one that badly, he can have it. I do something I have never done before. I retreat.

I hear more sounds of fighting, but I have no desire to join in. Today was the best chance I would ever have to get back at my captors, and it all went wrong. I do not resist as the larger Vikings lead and prod me back into my cell. It sounds like they have imprisoned the night dragon as well. Small comfort.

Later, in the silence and the darkness, I think about what happened. If they imprisoned the night dragon, it means he was not on their side. There was no trick. The little one really was harmless.

So what was he trying to do?

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Show a Little Respect\*\*** Chapter 2

It was just a few hours later when I heard the other dragons being released, one by one. There were no fighting sounds, no Viking sounds at all, except for one quiet voice. Dragons released... no fighting... something was very wrong. The one voice was the little Viking. And he was talking to me now.

I did not understand him, of course, but his tone was peaceful. I would not have believed it if I had not seen him cast his weapons aside, such a short time ago. I heard the door begin to open. I braced to leap.

And then I relaxed. Leaping had done me no good the first time. If this really was some trick, I would not leap into it. I would let the situation develop, and strike at my own chosen moment, not theirs. And if this little Viking somehow meant peace...

Then what? Dragons do not even have a word for "peace;" we have to say "not-any-war" to communicate the idea. What do you do when you are at peace with someone?

The doors opened, daylight flooded in, and there was the little Viking again, unarmed and helmetless. Again, he reached for my nose, in a gesture that acknowledged what I could do, combined with a firm request not to do it. Respect. I stepped out of the cell; he gave ground and let me move freely. Or was he leading me? I was not sure.

Behind him were a handful of other Vikings, most with helmets, but



none with weapons. The little one stopped me " he stopped me! " next to one of them. This one looked strong, but fearful. The little one made the same "issokay, issokay" noise he had made to me, but he was talking to one of his own kind this time. He placed the other one's hand on my nose.

I looked at him. His fear faded, but was not replaced with attack. This one also understood respect, mixed with strength. "I like this one," I rumbled. I am sure they did not understand me, but the meaning was clear enough.

The next thing I knew, I was part of a four-dragon mixed flight with five human riders. We left the ring that imprisoned us, never to return. Our destination: home. We did not know what we would find there; we had all been imprisoned for a long time. All we knew was that anything was better than the dark cells and the fighting ring. Flying again was perfect pleasure; the Viking on my neck did not weigh me down.

We arrived in the middle of a battle between the great dragon and a horde of Vikings. The great one was winning, of course. Should we throw our weight behind her, or just let her fight?

The great one only made demands, and ate those who failed her. She had never shown respect.

We fought the great dragon, to help the Vikings. If that was not proof that the world had turned upside-down, then I am a Terrible Terror.

My rider made the clattering noise that makes it impossible to aim, see clearly, or think. He must have meant it for the great dragon, but it affected me as well. I could not hold my position. I felt the great one lurch against me, felt my rider fall off. There was nothing I could do; I could barely save myself.

The effects of the clattering take a minute to wear off. I spiraled down to the ground and landed, hard. The Vikings ignored me; when has that ever happened before? They were fixated on the great one and her fight with " what? The night dragon? Again, where did he come from?

I noticed that the dark one also has a rider. It is the little Viking, the one I tried to kill. They flew well together, thinking and moving as one, staying just ahead of the great dragon that plainly wants to eat them both. Is there some bond between them? Do they share respect? Is that why the dark one defended him? I quickly looked at the army of Vikings in front of me, and I found my own rider, safe. Good.

The dark one shot upwards into the clouds, followed by the great one. I saw a firefight in the clouds. They dove down again, straight down. The night dragon pulled out; the great one did not. A huge fireball marked the end of our slavery to the great dragon. The Vikings had won.

But where was the celebration? Why were they so somber, so still? As the smoke cleared, I saw the night dragon, lying limp on the ground. Where was his rider, the little one? I suddenly understood the Vikings' mood. This little one who showed respect, who flew bravely,



who set dragons free " was he gone? For so long, I had wished Vikings dead, and now that one had died, I felt only sorrow.

The dark one moaned; apparently he had hit the ground hard. He had some kind of interaction with the largest Viking " what a contrast to the little one! And suddenly, he opened his wings, and " the little one! Alive! Even the joy of escaping my cell did not compare to what I felt at the sight of that tiny Viking. I stuck my head in between two of the other warriors and roared out my delight. I think I surprised them. They surprised me by not attacking.

### 3. Chapter 3

**\*\*Show a Little Respect\*\*** Chapter 3

The last place on earth I thought I would ever go was the village where I had been imprisoned. All the Vikings went there, including my rider and the little one. I was not sure if I would stay, or if I would just confirm that I hated the place and leave.

I made my decision when they put out the fish. They turned their torches, which they used for seeing and fighting dragons in the dark, into trays full of fish to feed dragons. That showed respect, and I stayed.

They made other changes, too. They allowed us to land on their houses, and walk in their streets. They put their weapons away, and removed the chains that covered the training ring. No dragon would ever be imprisoned there again.

We also made changes. We stopped raiding their livestock and burning their buildings. Instead, we ate the fish they gave us, and let them ride us.

The little Viking was not seen for weeks. When he finally reappeared, it caused much excitement. All the dragons were happy to see him again. Imagine " dragons happy to see a Viking alive!

My own rider is not as kind as the little one. Sometimes he forgets things, or does not ride carefully, or is inconsiderate. But he always shows me respect.

I think that is all I ever wanted, and I think I deserve it. After all, I am the ruler of the sky.

End  
file.